

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER
LISTED

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NOV 04 2009

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-9000a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Garfield Elementary School
Other name/site number 041-0020-0226

2. Location

Street & number 300 NW 7th Street ☐ not for publication
City or town Abilene ☐ vicinity
State Kansas Code KS County Dickinson Code 041 Zip code 67410

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination
☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of
Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property
☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant
☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Patrick Selmer
Signature of certifying official/Title
Kansas State Historical Society

9-18-09
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional
Comments.)

Signature of commenting official /Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

☒ entered in the National Register.

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the National
Register

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register

☐ removed from the National
Register

☐ other, (explain:)

Garfield Elementary School
Name of Property

Dickinson County, Kansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	2	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	2	total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
Historic Public Schools of Kansas AND New Deal-era Resources in Kansas

**Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register**
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter Categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Art Moderne

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation - Concrete

Walls - Brick

Roof - Asphalt

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Garfield Elementary School
Name of Property

Dickinson County, Kansas
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1942-1959

Significant Dates

1942-construction; 1957-expansion

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/BUILDER

Joseph Radolinsky, Architect (Kansas City, Kansas) w/ Frank Cayton, Associate/Supervising Architect (Abilene)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ Previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering record # _____

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Name of repository:

USD 435 (Abilene) Board of Education Office/files

Name of Property

County and State

Acreage of Property- less than one

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

[illegible]☐ See continuation sheet

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

Name/title Brenda R. Spencer

Organization Spencer Preservation

Date 30 March, 2009

Street & number 10150 Onaga Road

Telephone 785-456-9857

City or town Wamego

State Kansas

Zip code 66547

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

Name USD 435, Abilene Public Schools (Larry K. Schmidt, Superintendent)

Street & number 213 N. Broadway

Telephone

City or town Abilene

State KS

Zip code 67410

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

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Historic Public Schools of Kansas MPS

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Garfield Elementary School
Abilene, Dickinson County, Kansas

7. Narrative Description

Garfield Elementary School was dedicated in April 1942, constructed with the assistance of the Federal Works Agency of the U.S. Government (WPA). The two-story blond brick building has a concrete foundation and concrete detailing. The building is a rectangular form with horizontal bands of window openings. Key functional components including the main entrance, auditorium, and kindergarten room, are articulated through contrasting forms and detailing. The main entrance is marked by a vertical tower that aligns with Broadway Avenue and the west facade has a series of vertical bands delineating the auditorium. Building entrances, including secondary entrances on the side and rear facades, feature horizontal concrete bands that project to form shallow canopies over the doors. The school reflects the early Modern Movement in architecture, defined by its simple rectangular massing, clean lines with contrasting forms, and subtle ornament. Concrete piers and pilasters at the building entrances feature geometric textile patterns reminiscent of Frank Lloyd Wright's modern designs. The original kindergarten room on the east end of the building reflects the Art Moderne style, typically characterized by curved forms.

The school was designed by Joseph W. Radotinsky, a Kansas City, Kansas architect who was known for his public architecture, including school buildings throughout the Midwest. Radotinsky's designs of the 1930s-40s were notable, breaking from the Progressive Era tenets that had defined educational architecture for the first three decades of the twentieth century. Review of school board minutes and media coverage of the school's planning and construction, clearly portrays an emphasis on modern accoutrements, an attention to functional aspects of the school's use, consideration of maintenance and performance of materials, and planning for future expansion. The design of the school must have been effective. Expanded fifteen years after its completion, the school has continued to serve the elementary population of the Abilene school system. Aside from the 1957 expansion, the only major alterations to the building have been replacement windows and modification of some original interior finishes. The building clearly conveys its original design and character on the exterior and interior.

Site

The school site is comprised of approximately two city blocks located north of downtown Abilene. The site is bordered by North 7th Street on the south and the vacated North 8th Street on the north. Garfield Elementary School is generally rectangular in plan and situated on the south half of the block bordered by North Cedar on the west and extending past the vacated Broadway/Spruceway on the east. The school property spans further east toward North Buckeye, encompassing the site of the old Junior High School, now used as a playground. The school grounds are located in a residential neighborhood with private single-family homes located along North Buckeye Avenue, east of the school site and neighborhoods surrounding the school on the north, west, and south. North Broadway terminates at the school site; the tower at the main building entrance, aligning with the road, is visible from the central business district that is located five blocks to the south.

The property has been occupied by a public school since Central Building, a four-room school, was built on the site in 1874. The Junior High School was built east of the Central Building, in 1906, and continued to function in that role after the existing Garfield Elementary School was constructed in 1942. The Junior High building was demolished in 1953.

The school faces south, fronting North 7th Street. It is setback from the curb on the south and west sides, forming a small grass lawn in the front and side of the school. Perimeter sidewalks circle the site and school

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building with walks extending to the multiple building entrances. The school grounds are distinguished by large deciduous trees on the west and south sides.

A paved playground is located in the rear (north) with parking off the alley (vacated N. 8th Street). North Broadway jogs at the school site and extends through the school property as a closed, private drive, aligning with Spruceway north of the school property. The closed drive separates the school lawn from the east playground. A paved parking lot is located at the southwest corner of 7th and Broadway, south of the school.

There are two ancillary structures located on the school site. A modular classroom was moved to the site in 1992 for use as an art classroom. This mobile unit is directly behind the school, off the northeast corner. A small storage building is located west of the kitchen, northwest of the school at the rear.

Exterior

The school is characterized by its rectilinear, horizontal form. Although the overall form is simple, the facades are articulated by stepped bays and subtle detailing. The front/south facade is comprised of three primary parts with the kindergarten room recessed on the east end of the building, being a forth component of the front facade. The building entrance and administrative functions are on the east and the auditorium, with a separate entrance, is on the west, with classrooms comprising the center/main body of the building. The center section is comprised of three symmetrical bays, each defined by sets of three windows per floor. The auditorium is located on the west end of the building and defined by a one-and-a-half-story plain brick wall. The school was originally designed with future expansion in mind. A classroom was added as a projecting bay on the west end of the second floor east of the auditorium. This bay is supported by concrete piers that frame a small patio. One of two auditorium entrances is located at the east end of the patio, east of the auditorium. The second floor projecting classroom bay defines the west section of the south facade. The east section of the south facade is defined in large part, by the vertical tower over the main building entrance. The tower features vertical bands of brick with recessed copper louvers; it serves as a ventilation tower, in addition to marking the building entrance. A one-story bay housing administrative functions is located east of the main entrance. The second classroom was added over the north half of the east end of the building, aligning with the roof line of the center classroom bay.

The Progressive Era had a significant impact on the design of schools, in particular, the design of spaces based on specific functions. It was typical to see special attention given to the kindergarten room and Garfield is a perfect example of that attention to detail. The kindergarten room is a recessed bay on the east end of the building, east of the administrative block and main building entrance. The room is a distinguishing feature of the building. It is a one-story bay with a curved wall of glass block on the east. The kindergarten room was designed with a separate building entrance on the south side and a second outside entrance on the north that provided direct access to the playground. The east facade is asymmetrical and articulated with multiple stepped bays. The curved kindergarten room is the primary component of the east facade, located on the north half of the facade. The administrative bay occupies the south half of the facade with a small entry alcove into the kindergarten room. The vertical tower over the main entry extends above the one-story administrative bay on the south half of the facade while the second floor classroom addition extends above the kindergarten bay on the north half of the east facade.

The rear/north facade is asymmetrical and embodies similar design principles as the front facade but is generally unadorned. A corbelled chimney and one-story entry bay project from the east end of the rear facade – features of the kindergarten room. A small concrete canopy defines the rear building entrance that

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aligns with the main building entrance on the south. An adjacent door provides direct exterior access into the restroom. These features are repeated on the west end of the rear facade, aligning with the auditorium entry on the west end of the south facade. The main body of the rear facade is comprised of single, and sets of three, bands of windows on the first and second floors. A kitchen was added in the 1957 expansion. It is a simple, functional bay with brick facades built on the north end of the auditorium. The west rear entrance is located at the intersection of the kitchen and original building.

The west facade of the school is distinguished by vertical concrete piers that project from the center bay of the auditorium. Full-height windows originally spanned between the piers, now downsized with opaque panels. The remainder of the west facade is a plain brick facade with subtle articulation; it has a slightly projecting bay (the stage area) on the south end and a recessed entry bay on the north, between the auditorium and kitchen addition. The southwest classroom addition, that projects to form a covered patio on the ground floor, is stepped back but visible on the south end of the west facade.

Interior

The plan configuration is a simple linear form with a central corridor feeding classrooms on the north and south sides of the building, the administrative block on the east end and auditorium on the west end. Twin stair towers are located on the north side of the corridor near each end of the building with restrooms adjacent to the stairs on each floor. The school was designed for the auditorium to function separately from the school to accommodate functions outside of school hours.

The original school featured five classrooms per floor, three on the south and two on the north. A project room, used for student science and art projects, etc., was located on each floor, in the center of the north side. The administrative block included an office, clinic/nurse's room and a waiting room with private bathroom. The library was located between the administrative offices and kindergarten room on the east end of the building. The school was designed to accommodate the addition of two classrooms. The 1957 expansion included the construction of these two classrooms as originally designed. The new rooms were located on the second floor, one over west end of the kindergarten room and library, and one over the southwest entrance. The auditorium was designed as a multi-purpose activity room. A kitchen was added in the 1957 expansion and the auditorium functioned as a cafeteria/lunch room. A stage was located on the south end of the auditorium. The stage and proscenium arch are extant but has been enclosed.

The interior of the school was generally unadorned with utilitarian finishes. The corridors had asphalt tile flooring and glazed block wainscoting (now painted) with plaster walls above. The plaster walls are intact, the glazed block has been painted and new VCT flooring installed. Classrooms originally had wood floors while rest rooms and stairs featured more durable finishes with terrazzo flooring. The terrazzo remains exposed in the restrooms and stairs and carpet has been installed over the wood floors in classrooms. Applied acoustic tile was the primary ceiling finish throughout which remains in place but covered by suspended acoustical tile ceilings in corridors and classrooms. Although utilitarian in function, the interior of the school had numerous well-crafted built-in features that remain in place today. The corridors have recessed alcoves for drinking fountains and fire extinguishers and recessed entrances to each classroom with multi-light paneled (9/2) wood doors. Each classroom featured a built-in wardrobe and storage closets and the project rooms featured built-in cabinets. Each classroom also had a recessed tiled alcove with a sink, chalkboards and tack space. The kindergarten room retains additional features including a fireplace located in a recessed alcove on the north and a window seat along the curved glass block wall on the east.

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A description of the school, following its completion, was provided in "New Garfield School Building is a Model Structure," in *The Abilene Daily Reflector* April 4, 1942, and a January, 1947 article in the *School Board Journal*. The following details are excerpted from those articles.

... The floors of the corridors are of asphalt tile and with the acoustical ceiling; the building has a coefficient of noise reduction of 70%. The corridor walls and rest rooms have glazed block wainscoting. The stairways and restroom floors are terrazzo. Toilets for the boys and girls, flanking the two stair towers, are so arranged that a student enters from the corridor side and may go directly to the playgrounds without returning to the corridors. A ticket office and store room is located inside the west entrance and a gate will close off the lower hall when the auditorium is in use, separate from the school. The auditorium of the building will have many uses. The seating capacity is 350. A stage is located on the south end of the auditorium. The floor is asphalt tile, the same as is in the corridors. The walls are the same brick as the exterior of the building. A small kitchen and restroom is located north of the auditorium off the Cedar Street entrance.

The office of the principal is in the southeast corner of the building to the right of the tower entrance. The office features a program clock and a loud-speaker system. West of the principal's office is the office of the school nurse. South of the office is the school library. The building is designed to permit the addition of two classrooms at a later date. The split heating system is located in the basement. Showers and dressing rooms are located west of the heating system. The entry tower serves as the building's ventilating system.

Classrooms are large and well-lighted with built-in cupboards, wardrobes, recessed lavatories in the walls and ample blackboard and tack board space. Project rooms with built-in cases, counters, and sinks are located on the first and second floors.

One of the most interesting rooms in the Garfield Building is the kindergarten. A private entrance on the south has been provided and a door on the north to the playground. The rounded east end of the room is enclosed by glass block. The window seat is covered with blue linoleum that matches the floor. The floor has a pattern that includes a circle and star with animals and the letters of the alphabet in contrasting colors. A fire place is located in a recessed alcove on the north side of the room. Above the fireplace is an oil painting of Mother Goose figures painted by G.N. Malm.¹ Enclosed cupboards for each student are located on the west end of the classroom and a private lavatory and closet.

Alterations

The school has experienced some alterations over the past sixty-seven years. The only change in the building's footprint occurred in the 1956-57 expansion that resulted in the addition of two classrooms and a cafeteria kitchen. The classrooms were added vertically as originally designed, but the cafeteria addition was constructed off of the auditorium, expanding the building to the north. The parking lot and playground at the rear of the school were paved in 1958. Some minor alterations were made in a 1978 remodeling of several Abilene schools to meet Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act with regards to Civil Rights of the Handicapped. Garfield was converted to an "Upper Elementary" in 1988 serving all of the district's 4th and 5th graders. The original kindergarten room was converted to the library and administrative offices expanded into the original library. The primary interior changes date to a 1990 renovation funded through a local bond. Most existing interior finishes date to the 1990 project. At that time, the glazed block wainscoting was painted, new VCT tile flooring was installed in the corridors and carpet in the classrooms. It is likely that the Malm painting in the kindergarten room was covered as a part of this project. A suspended ceiling was installed throughout but does not obscure door transoms. The most significant exterior alteration also dates to this project – the

¹ Additional information on Lindsborg painter G. N. Malm is provided in the National Register nomination for the Holmberg and Johnson Blacksmith Shop, 122 N. Main, Lindsborg Kansas (Spencer, 2008).

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replacement of the original windows. The only major changes in recent years were the placement of the mobile unit in the rear of the school for art classes in 1992 and the addition of air-conditioning in 1994.

Summary

Garfield Elementary School retains a high degree of historic integrity. The exterior of the building reflects the original design and planned 1957 expansion. The only major exterior alteration since the 1957 addition has been the replacement of windows in 1990. The school retains its original plan configuration with only minor changes in use. Key original features including the interior doors, built-in wardrobes, auditorium stage, and kindergarten fireplace and window seat, remain in place and portray the character of the original design. Most existing finishes date to the 1990 renovation but the building retains the glazed block wainscot, although it has been painted, in the corridors; plaster walls are extant and the terrazzo flooring remains exposed in the rest rooms and stair towers.

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Garfield Elementary School
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Statement of Significance

Garfield Elementary School in Abilene is being nominated to the National Register under the *Historic Public Schools of Kansas* and the *New Deal-era Resources in Kansas* Multiple Property Nominations. The building is significant on a local level under Criterion A as the second public school on this site, built to replace the condemned former Garfield School (Central Building) built in 1874. It is also an excellent representative of New Deal-era architecture, constructed with the assistance of the federal Work Projects Administration in 1942. Built as an elementary school, Garfield Elementary was converted to an Upper Elementary School, serving grades 4-5, in 1988 and continues to serve that function today. The school is also significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a representative of an early Modern Movement school with Art Moderne influences, public architecture funded through the PWA, and the work of Kansas City, Kansas architect Joseph W. Radotinsky.

The building continues to function in its original use as a school. Its period of significance spans from the building's completion in 1942 to 1959, the fifty-year age threshold for historic properties. Garfield Elementary School is an excellent representative of the *City Graded School* Property Type and meets the registration requirements set forth in the multiple property submission, *Historic Public Schools of Kansas*.

Garfield Elementary School

A four-room school (Central Building) was constructed on the site of the existing Garfield Elementary School in 1874. Eight rooms were added to this building in 1882; the high school was held on the upper-floor from 1880 to 1894. When the junior high-school was built east of the Central Building in 1906, Central Building was renamed Garfield School and served the eight elementary grades. The building continued to serve the school district as grade school classrooms until its condemnation in 1940.

Clyde Latcham, state fire marshal declared Garfield School unfit for future use in March, 1940. The Abilene School Board authorized application for demolition of the school building to the federal authorities of the WPA at their May 1, 1940 meeting. At the same meeting, they entered into a contract with J.W. Radotinsky of Kansas City and Frank Cayton of Abilene for design of a new school.²

In June, 1940, the School Board authorized filing an application through the Federal Works Agency of the United States Government for a grant of labor and materials amounting to 40% of the cost of erecting, equipping, and furnishing two new schools. The estimated grant totals were \$41,500 for Garfield and \$30,000 for McKinley, to be matched by \$107,250 in bonds.³ The board discussed specifications, floor materials and acoustic treatments at a special meeting with the architects in July, 1940; they approved Radotinsky's fee of 6% based on an estimated cost of \$103,700 for Garfield school. The school bond issue passed in July, 1940 and the board approved issuing bonds in the amount of \$62,250 in December, 1940.

² USD 435 Board of Education Meeting Minutes, Book II.

³ Ibid. Like the old Garfield School, a second elementary school, McKinley, was also deemed unsafe by the fire marshal and originally slated for replacement along with Garfield School. The board minutes are unclear regarding the change in plans to construct only one school (Garfield) in the 1940s. Board minutes indicate that the board later applied for additional federal grants for preliminary studies of Abilene's school system and again for planning of a new high school and McKinley Elementary in 1946. Bids were awarded in 1949 for demolition of the existing McKinley School and Joseph Radotinsky was hired to design a new elementary school. The new McKinley Elementary was completed in 1951 and construction of the new high school followed in 1955. Both schools were designed by Radotinsky.

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Low bids were accepted in February, 1941 for the new Garfield School. The following contracts were awarded:

- Ceco Steel Products-reinforcing steel
- Shockey and Landes Hardware of Abilene
- Capital Iron Works of Topeka-Toilet partitions, steel and iron
- Lusco Brick and Stone-Wichita-Hollow metal doors
- Wiseman Millwork Co., Topeka-Millwork
- F.L. Eashelman, Abilene-Plumbing and Heating
- Gunzelman Bros, Abilene-Electrical

Construction on the new Garfield School began on March 20, 1941. The state W.P. A. Administrator transferred Joseph Strowig of Holton, to Abilene as superintendent of construction for the new Garfield School building. Strowig had recently completed construction of W.P.A. school buildings at Dennison and Americus. Ed Reddy was foreman of the Garfield project, in charge of all cement work. It was estimated that 60 W.P.A. men would regularly be assigned to the Garfield project from this time forward until completion.⁴ The School Board passed a resolution in January 1942 to approve an additional \$7,500 in emergency funding for Garfield School, due to unforeseen increases in the cost of building materials, labor, and equipment (constructed during WWII).⁵

Garfield Elementary School was dedicated April 10, 1942 and served the Abilene population with no major changes for more than ten years. By the early 1950s, the district was experiencing rapid growth and was projected to have difficulty housing the growing school population. A 1956 article in the local paper noted that an "increase of 123 students this year has seriously taxed the existing physical plant facilities of Abilene schools. Current student population is 1615 and expected to exceed 1800 by 1959-1960."⁶ Garfield was the first building to be completed in an extensive school improvement and expansion program. No new buildings were constructed after Garfield, for a period during and immediately following WWII but the construction program resumed in 1950. McKinley Elementary School was constructed in 1951 and a new high school, dedicated in September, 1955. Both schools were designed by Radotinsky. The growing school population required the addition of new elementary classrooms at McKinley and Garfield. A \$257,000 bond issue was passed in 1956 for the elementary expansions. The Garfield addition included two classrooms and a cafeteria kitchen.

A special meeting was held in January, 1957 during which the School Board opened bids and awarded contracts to the lowest responsible bidder for General Construction, including grounds improvements and equipment, plumbing and heating, electrical wiring and lighting, for additions to McKinley and Garfield Elementary Schools. Architect Joseph Radotinsky opened the bids. Johnson Brothers Construction of Salina was awarded the construction contract; Gage Plumbing and Heating and Jarrett Electric of Salina were awarded the HVAC and electric contracts.⁷

In a re-allocation of physical facilities, the Abilene Board of Education created elementary attendance centers in 1988. Each of the three elementary schools would house two grade levels versus the former practice of

⁴ The Abilene Reflector, April 18, 1941.

⁵ Board Minutes.

⁶ Abilene Reflector-Chronicle, Sept 12, 1956.

⁷ Board Minutes.

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each school serving all elementary grades. Garfield became the Upper Elementary, serving grades four and five. The school continues in this function today.

Historic Public Schools of Kansas⁸ and New Deal-era Resources in Kansas⁹

As defined in the Historic Kansas Schools multiple property submission, *City Schools* are generally schools in cities of the first and second class (over 2,000 population); however, population is not the sole criterion for the property type. The distinguishing factor for this property type is the type of schools. City schools almost always include a separate high school (or multiple high schools) to serve the residents of the city. The graded school is also a distinguishing factor between the city schools and town schools. In cities, the graded school evolved into grade schools and later, the modern elementary school.

Garfield Elementary School is categorized as a *City Graded School*, as defined in the Historic Schools MPS. In addition to its reflection of the basic characteristics of the property type, the school is also significant as a representative of New Deal-era Resources reflecting the government program's far-reaching impact on educational facilities in Kansas and across the nation.

The Depression brought local school construction to a halt. Roosevelt's New Deal Programs established the Public Works Administration (PWA) and Work Progress Agency (WPA) to increase employment which resulted in one of the greatest periods of school construction, exceeding the period following WWI. The National Register Multiple Property Nomination *New Deal-era Resources in Kansas*, developed by Elizabeth Rosin in 2002, provides a thorough summary of the various New Deal Programs and their impact in Kansas. Garfield Elementary School is an excellent representative of the Educational Facilities Property Type as identified in the New Deal MPS. Also consistent with the registration requirements, Garfield School is eligible for listing under the New Deal MPS having been constructed using federal relief funds.

The WPA was created through the Emergency Relief Appropriations Act in 1935 with the primary objective of creating local jobs. WPA is best known for its construction projects. Of over 125,000 buildings that were constructed or improved, nearly one-third was schools. Between July 1, 1935 and June 1, 1939, the WPA built or improved 619 buildings in Kansas including 142 schools, 52 stadiums, 16 auditoriums and 12 gymnasiums. An article in the March 1940 *Kansas Teacher* reported that WPA had built approximately 250 new school buildings and made improvements for nearly 200 others (the new buildings included 47 schools, fifty-five stadiums, one hundred and twenty recreational buildings, five libraries, eight gymnasiums, seven dormitories and several other buildings).¹⁰ Clarence Nevins, the state WPA administrator estimated that 600 men, on average had been employed in the construction or repair of Kansas schools (in 1939).¹¹

PWA and WPA programs resulted in construction of all types of schools in cities and towns across the nation. Schools constructed between the Depression and WWII reflected a change in architectural styles. Just as the Progressive Era introduced the 'modern' high school in terms of school facilities, the New Deal Era introduced modern architectural styles. The Art Moderne and Art Deco styles emerged as the dominate influences during this period. These schools are considered the first "modern" school buildings, more simplistic in form with flat roofs and limited ornamentation.

⁸ Brenda Spencer, *Historic Schools of Kansas* Multiple Property Nomination to the National Register, September, 2004.

⁹ Elizabeth Rosin, *New Deal-era Resources in Kansas* Multiple Property Nomination to the National Register, 2002.

¹⁰ George F. Hillyer and P.J. Matson, "New Schools With Uncle Sam's Help," *The Kansas Teacher* 48 (March, 1940): 10.

¹¹ Ibid.

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Historic Public Schools of Kansas MPS

Garfield Elementary School
Abilene, Dickinson County, Kansas

Section Number 8 Page 9

Garfield Elementary School is an excellent representative of a New Deal-era school, reflecting the Modern Movement in architecture and Art Moderne stylistic influences.

Architect Joseph Radotinsky

Garfield Elementary School is one of at least three public schools in Abilene designed by Kansas City, Kansas architect, Joseph W. Radotinsky. The Abilene newspaper reported that "the selection of the architects for the building [Garfield School] was made with regard for character, integrity, ability and fitness for the task. Joseph W. Radotinsky of Kansas City, Kansas had an impressive record in schools designed in recent years. Two noteworthy buildings designed by Radotinsky in the past few years are the Wyandotte High School in Kansas City and the Decatur County Community High School in Oberlin."¹²

The article went on to note that "the work of Frank Cayton, the supervising architect, is well-known to Abilene people. A member of the architectural firm of Murray and Cayton, he has supervised many local projects. The library, swimming pool, city stadium, Episcopal Church, and high school stadium are Cayton's work. The gymnasium-science building, industrial arts building, and grade school at Chapman are other examples of Cayton's design."¹³

Thirteen years and two local schools later, the Abilene newspaper again regaled Radotinsky around the time that the new high school was dedicated, in 1956. "New Abilene High School designed by Joseph W. Radotinsky, recognized as one of the country's leading authorities on the building of schools, hospitals, and office buildings. Charles E. Hawkes, former Abilene school principal and superintendent is now associated with the Radotinsky firm in the capacity of consultant on school requirements."¹⁴ Although it was common for a school district to maintain an association with a single architect for multiple projects, Hawkes association with Radotinsky's firm reveals a local tie to Abilene.

Joseph W. Radotinsky was born in Kirkwood, Missouri, in 1902 and came to Kansas City, Kansas, at the age of 7. He attended the old Kansas City, Kansas high school and was employed by the firm of Rose and Peterson Architects of Kansas City as a part-time draftsman while still in school. Peterson reportedly helped finance the would-be-architect's education at the University of Kansas, where Radotinsky graduated in 1924. Radotinsky later went to New York and worked for the firm of Thomas W. Lamb, one of the largest architectural firms in the nation at that time. Radotinsky won the gold medal in the Ecole-des-Beaux Arts New York City Municipal Arts Competition. He returned to Kansas City in 1928 and worked for Archer & Gloyd. After a varied career that included several terms as State Architect (under three governors-Reed, Woodring, and Landon), Radotinsky established a private practice in Kansas City, Kansas in association with the Chicago firm Hamilton, Fellows and Nedved, to supervise construction of the new Wyandotte High School. In the late 1930s Radotinsky became, like W.W. Rose before him, official architect for the Kansas City, Kansas Board of Education. In this position he subsequently designed numerous schools and many additions and alterations to public schools in Kansas City, Kansas. Extant Kansas City area schools to his credit include Argentine and Sumner high schools, Turner and Washington schools, and West, Northeast and Northwest junior high schools.

¹² "New Garfield School Building is a Model Structure", in The Abilene Daily Reflector April 4, 1942,

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ "AHS Architect is Regarded as Tops in Nation", The Abilene Reflector-Chronicle September 14, 1955.

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Historic Public Schools of Kansas MPS

Section Number 8 Page 10

Garfield Elementary School
Abilene, Dickinson County, Kansas

Radotinsky designed Parker Elementary School built at 33rd and Haskell in Kansas City in 1940, one of many schools built under the auspices of the WPA. In 1942, Parker Elementary School was chosen for an award, by the American Institute of Architects, as being the best public building erected in 1940 in the area, including western Missouri and eastern Kansas. The design for Parker Elementary is not unlike Garfield Elementary in Abilene with a simple overall form, horizontal lines, and geometric detailing (See photo in additional documentation at end of nomination). Radotinsky's designs in the 1930s and 40s reflected the trend toward modern school facilities in function and appearance. He received numerous commissions through the Public Works Administration including several schools throughout Kansas and the Jewell County Courthouse in Mankato. Abilene's Garfield School and the Jewell County Courthouse were included in a WPA feature article in *Kansas Heritage*.¹⁵

During WWII, Radotinsky designed Forbes Air Force Base in Topeka, the airbase in Herington, and O'Reilly General Hospital in Springfield, Missouri. Some of his best-known designs were modern, post-war buildings. Notable projects in the Kansas City area include the American Hereford Building, the Federal Building, Kansas City Public Library and the Board of Education Building. Radotinsky partnered with Raymond E. Meyn and Fred M. Deardorff forming the firm, Radotinsky, Meyn & Deardorff in 1957. Joseph Radotinsky died in 1983.¹⁶

Following is a listing of schools known to have been designed by Joseph W. Radotinsky (not all-inclusive):

- Vernon Elementary School, Kansas City, 1935-36
- Sherman County Community High School, Goodland, 1937
- Attucks Elementary, Kansas City, 1938
- Alcott Elementary, Chanute, 1938
- Sumner High School and Athletic Field, Kansas City, 1938-40
- Quinter Rural High School No.3, Quinter, 1939
- Decatur Community High School, Oberlin, 1939
- Rockwell Administration Center (Old Hays High School), 1939
- Sumner High School/Academy, Kansas City, 1939
- Parker Elementary School, Kansas City, 1940
- Ness City Elementary, 1941
- Garfield Elementary, Abilene, 1941
- Syracuse High School, 1950
- McKinley Elementary, Abilene, 1951
- Trego Community High School, Wakeeney, 1951
- Central High School, Salina, 1952
- Turner Middle School, Kansas City, 1953
- Abilene High School, 1954

Summary

Constructed of blond brick and concrete, Garfield Elementary School is an excellent example of the work of Kansas City, Kansas architect Joseph W. Radotinsky, a regional architect who established a name in the design of Modern style schools throughout the Midwest. Garfield School portrays the Modern Movement in

¹⁵ Susan S. Novak, "WPA Kansas," *Kansas Heritage*. Autumn, 2003 (excerpt provided in Additional Documentation attached to nomination).

¹⁶ Biographical information on Joseph Radotinsky was taken from:
Lucille Doores, "Architect Turns Farmer to Relax," *Kansas City Kansan*. August 16, 1959 and "Former Kansas State Architect Dies in KCK," Clipping File and Vertical File, Kansas State Historical Society and the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools web site http://www.kckps.org/disthistory/dist-history/bios/architects_associates.htm.

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Historic Public Schools of Kansas MPS

**Garfield Elementary School
Abilene, Dickinson County, Kansas**

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architecture with its simple form characterized by horizontal lines, stepped bays, and concrete detailing. The school embodies Art Moderne stylistic references with the curved kindergarten bay on the east end. The building retains a high degree of historic integrity, reflecting its original design and character.

Garfield Elementary School was completed in 1942, constructed through the WPA federal works program. The school was built to replace the dilapidated "Central Building," that was constructed in 1874 and continues to serve the patrons of the USD 435 Abilene school system and community. Garfield Elementary School is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under the multiple property documentation form *Historic Public Schools of Kansas* as a representative of the *City Graded School* property type.

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Historic Public Schools of Kansas MPS

Garfield Elementary School
Abilene, Dickinson County, Kansas

Section Number 9 & 10 Page 12

9. Bibliography

The Abilene Daily Reflector.

The Abilene Reflector-Chronicle.

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"Joseph W. Radotinsky." Vertical Files, Kansas State Historical Society.

Kansas City Kansas Planning Department. *Kansas City, Kansas Historic Landmarks and Historic Districts.*

Kansas City, Kansas Public School System History, accessed on-line http://www.kckps.org/disthistory/dist-history/bios/architects_associates.htm.

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Radotinsky, J.W. Blueprints for Garfield Elementary School, Abilene, Kansas, 1942.

Robinson, W.C. *The Garfield School at Abilene, Kansas,* School Board Journal. January, 1947, 41-43.

Rosin, Elizabeth. *New Deal-era Resources in Kansas* Multiple Property Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. June, 2002.

Schmidt, Larry K. *Kansas State Historical Society Preliminary Site Investigation Questionnaire for Garfield Elementary School.* December, 2008.

Spencer, Brenda. *Historic Public Schools of Kansas* Multiple Property Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. August, 2004.

10. Geographic Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The legal description of the school site is: Lots 5 thru 13 odd, inclusive; odd Lots 109 thru 129; and vacated Spruce Street, Southwick and Augustine Addition, Abilene, Kansas.

Boundary Justification

The boundary reflects the site on which the building is located and described by the legal description above.

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Historic Public Schools of Kansas MPS

Section Number- Additional Documentation Page 13

Garfield Elementary School
Abilene, Dickinson County, Kansas

Additional Documentation

Photographs

Photographer: Brenda R. Spencer

Date: 24 February, 2009

Original Files: Original digital image files provided on disc with nomination.

<u>Photo #</u>	<u>Camera Direction</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	N	View of Garfield Elementary School from N. Broadway; front facade
2	NE	Playground east of school, site of old Junior High School
3	W	East Facade
4	SE	North/Rear Facade
5	SE	East rear entry, entry to restroom, entry to kindergarten from playground on North – East end north facade
6	E	West/Auditorium Facade
7	NW	Front/South and East Facades
8	N	Main Entrance and Ventilation Tower, east end of south/front facade
9	NE	Detail of Main Entrance
10	E	East end of 1 st floor corridor, entry to library (original kindergarten)
11	E	Original Kindergarten Room (now used as library)
12	NW	Fireplace alcove on north wall of kindergarten room Malm Mural originally located over fireplace
13	SE	Window seat at glass block window wall on east end of kindergarten room
14	W	1 st floor corridor, east stair on right
15	NE	Girls rest room, east end of 1 st floor – terrazzo floors
16	SW	Typical classroom, south side of 1 st floor
17	SW	Southwest entry with ticket window
18	S	Auditorium with stage on south end
19	SW	West entry, north of auditorium
20	S	Kitchen (1957 Addition), terrazzo floors, original glazed block walls
21	N	West stair tower, from 1 st floor
22	E	2 nd floor corridor with boy's rest room on left
23	S	Typical classroom with built-in wardrobe and closets extant North side of 2 nd floor
24	SW	Typical 9/2 paneled wood door at recessed classroom entrances
25	S	Typical tiled (painted) sink alcove in each classroom
26	N	Built-in cabinets in teacher's lounge (original "project" room), 1 st floor

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Garfield Elementary School
Abilene, Dickinson County, Kansas

Additional Documentation

Historic Images

The following attachments were provided by the USD 435 Board of Education except where noted.

Blueprints of original school design by Jos. W. Radotinsky.

Architect's Rendering of Garfield School c.1940 Jos. W. Radotinsky and Frank Cayton, Associated Architects

Program from Building Dedication, April 1942.

Historic image of school site with Garfield Elementary and the old Junior High School c. 1950 (undated)

Interior view showing original corridor finishes prior to 1990 renovation (undated)

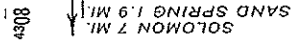
A copy of the article entitled *The Garfield School at Abilene, Kansas* by W.C. Robinson published in School Board Journal, January, 1947.

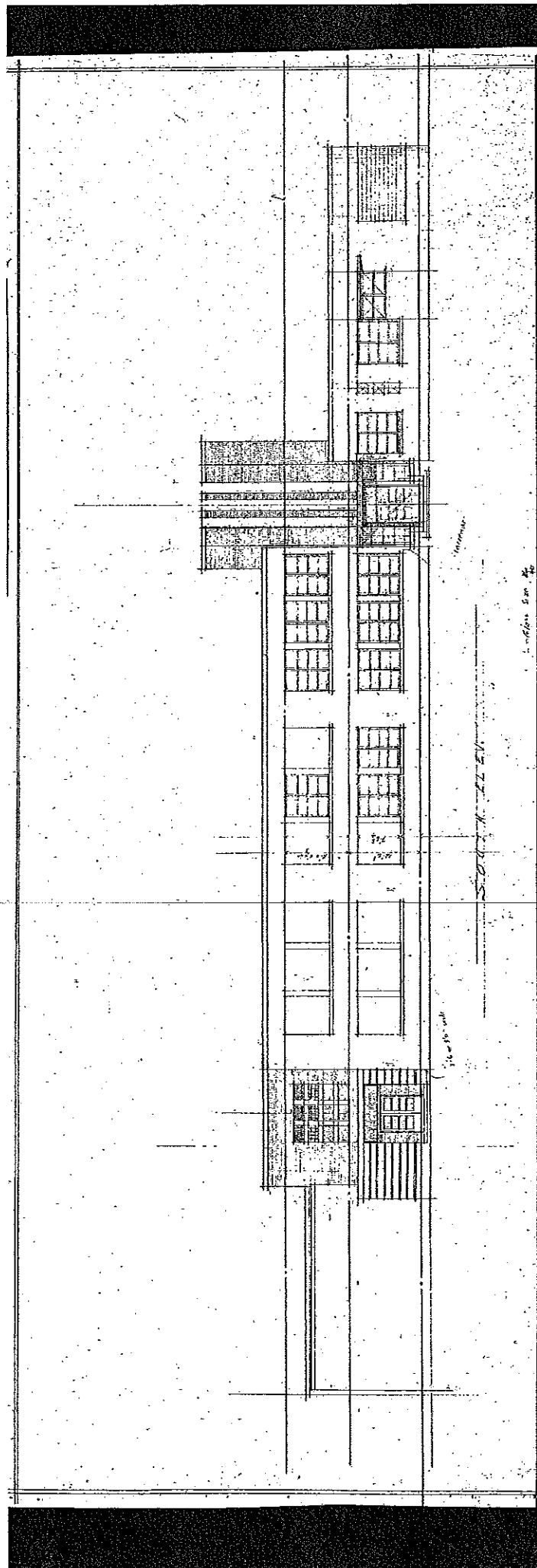
An excerpt from the article entitled *WPA Kansas* by Susan S. Novak published in Kansas Heritage, Autumn, 2003.

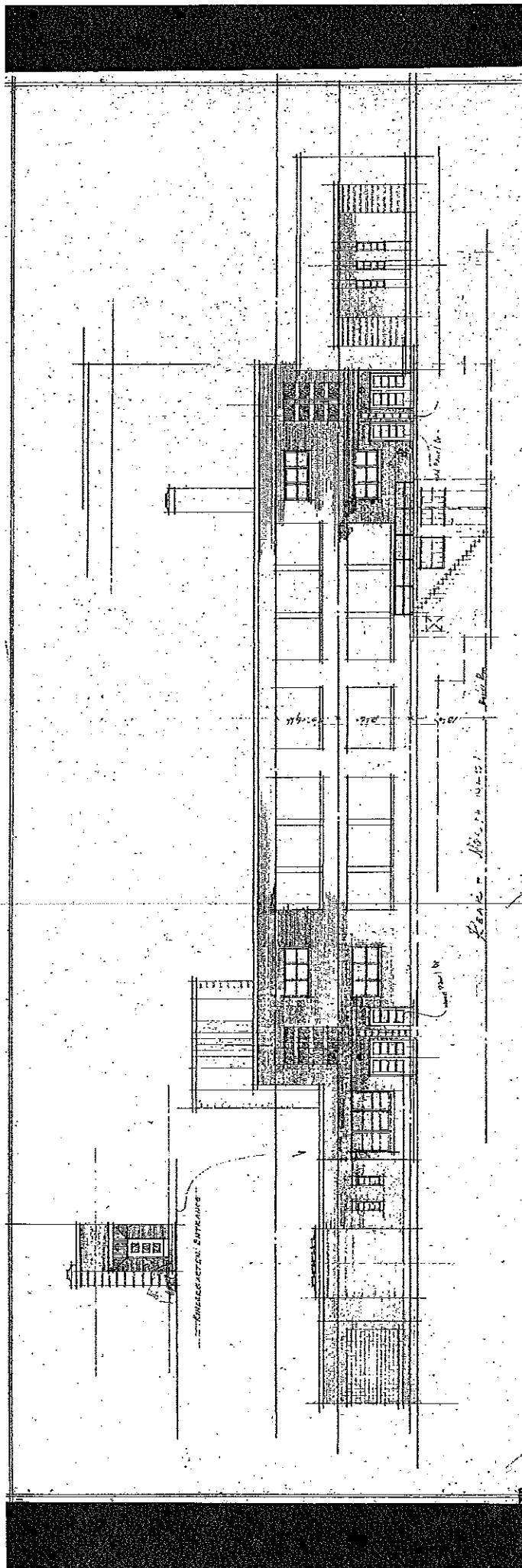
Photograph of Parker Elementary School, Kansas City, Kansas. Kansas City, Kansas Public School System History, accessed on-line <http://www.kckps.org/disthistory/dist-history/bios/architects-associates.htm>

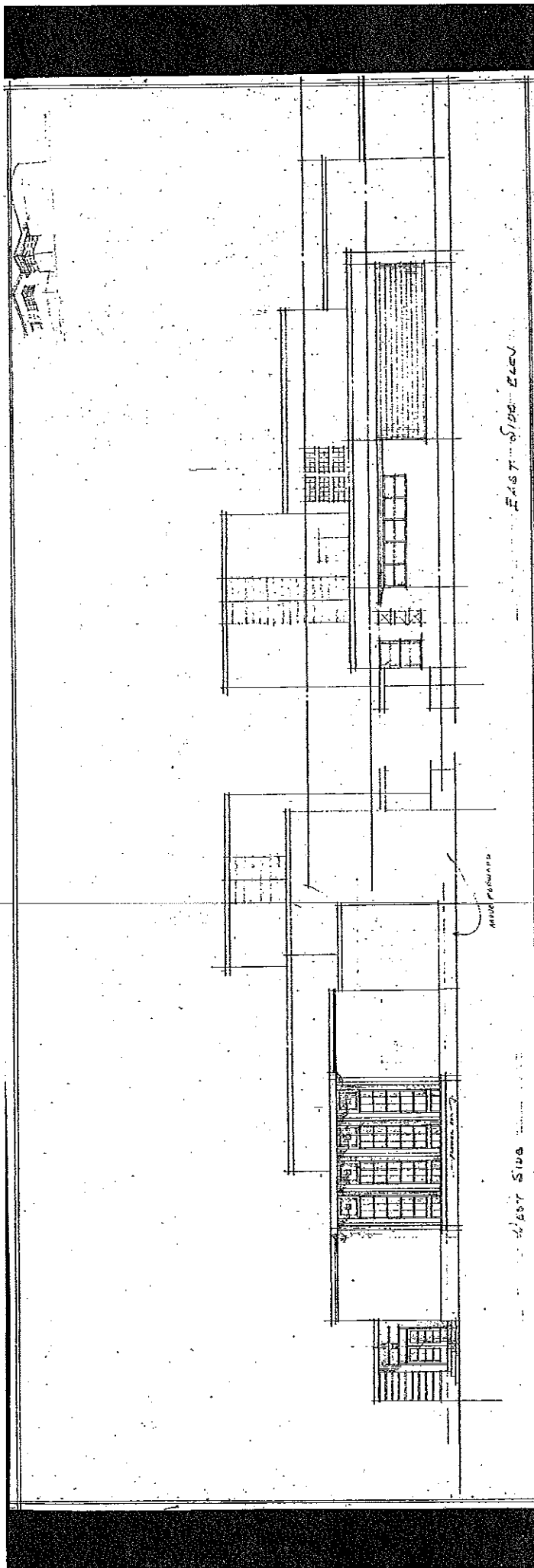
Abilene, Dickinson Co., KS

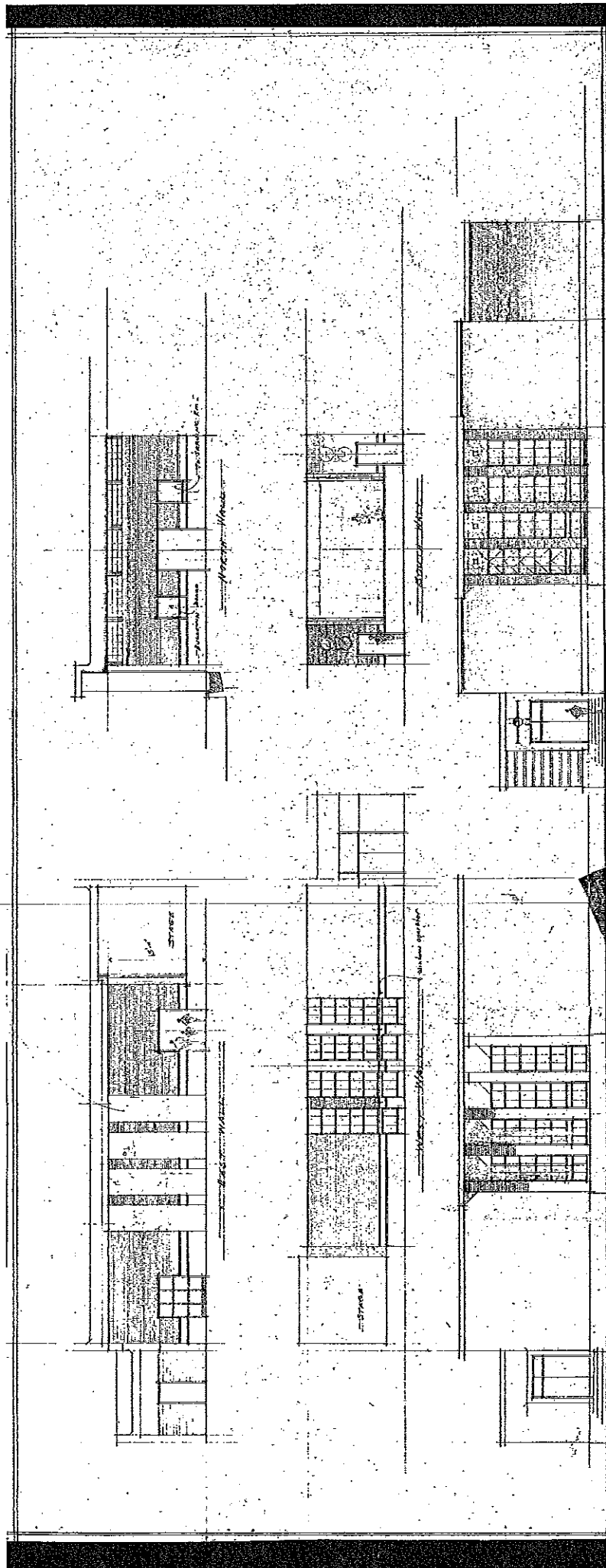
654695 E
4309410 N
Zone 14

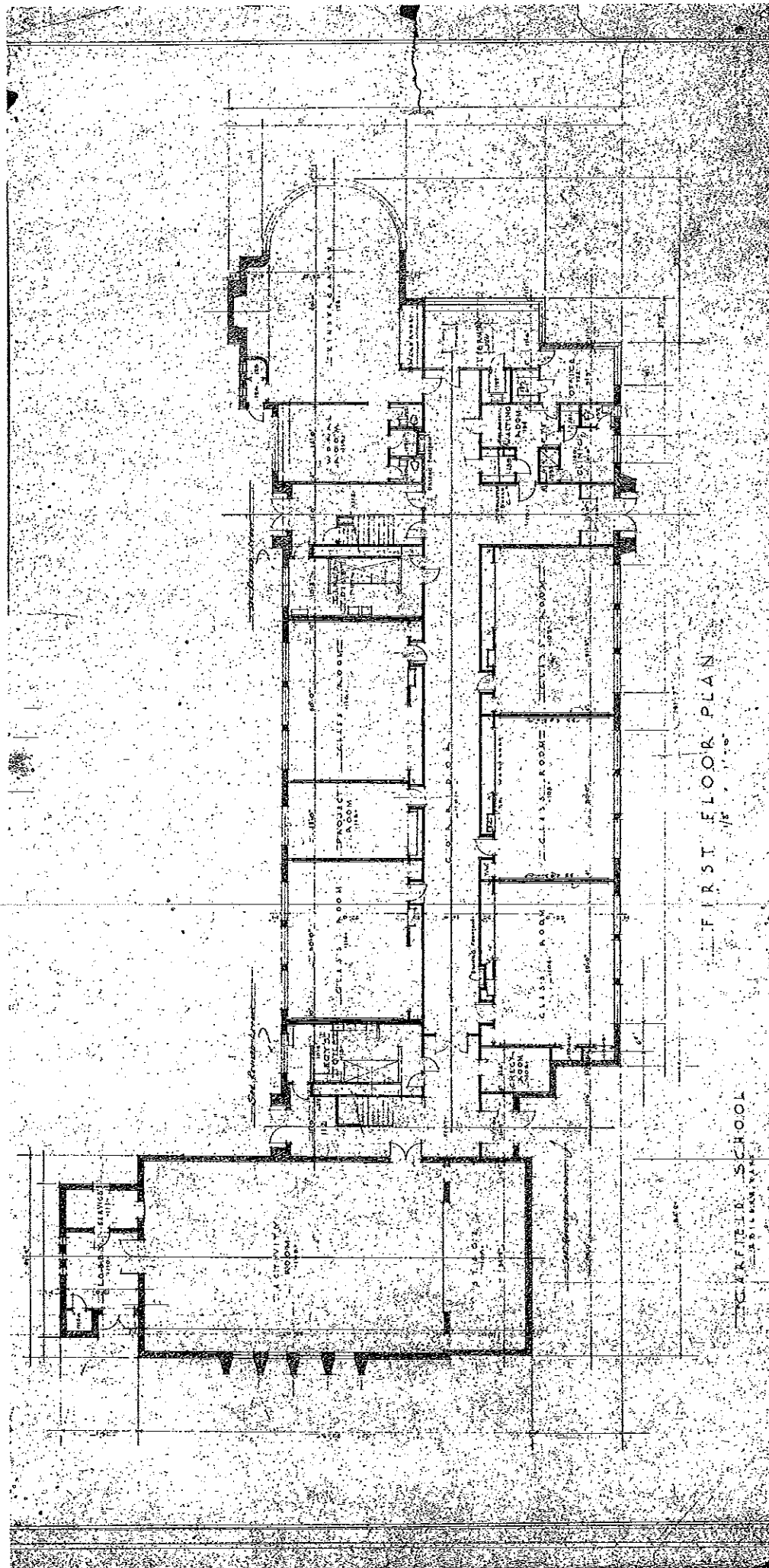


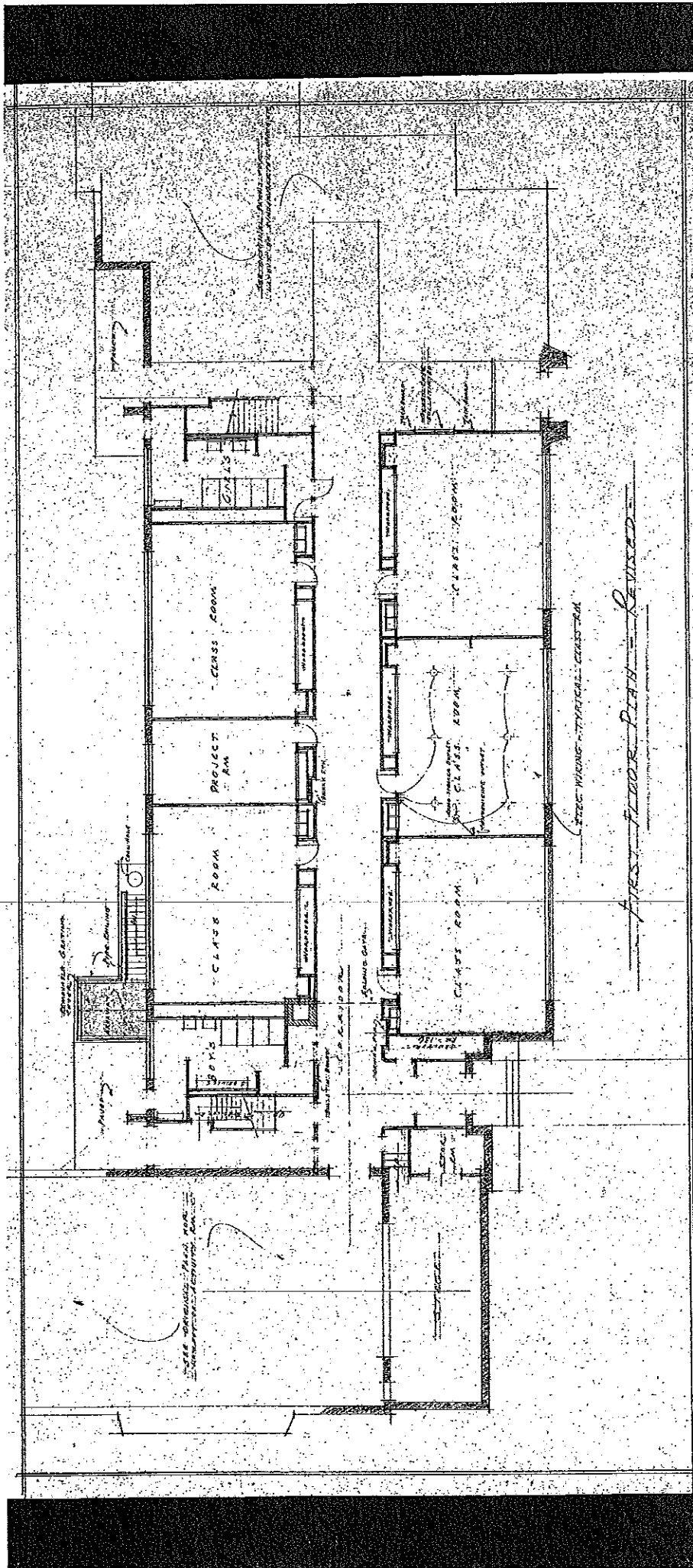


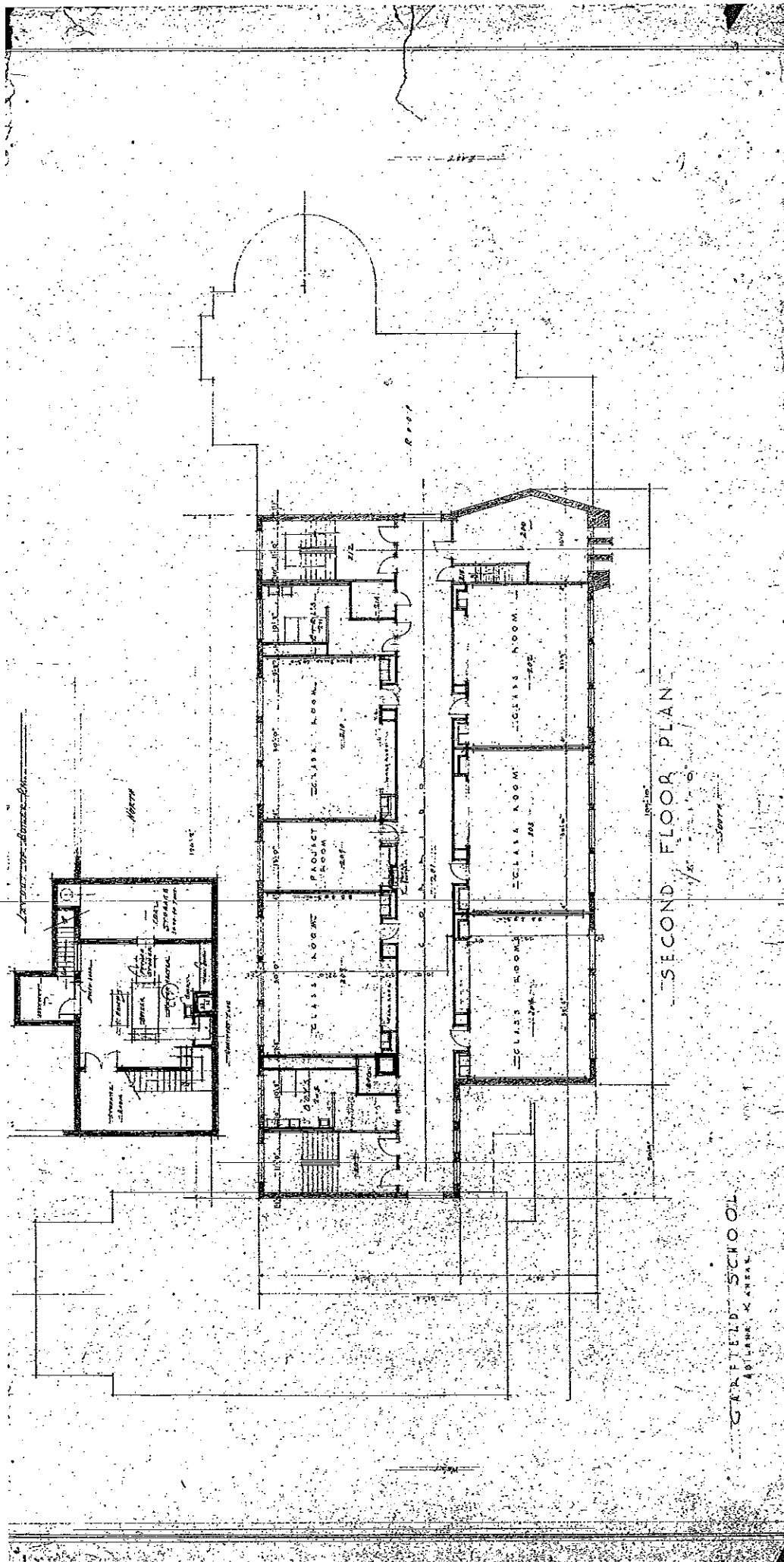


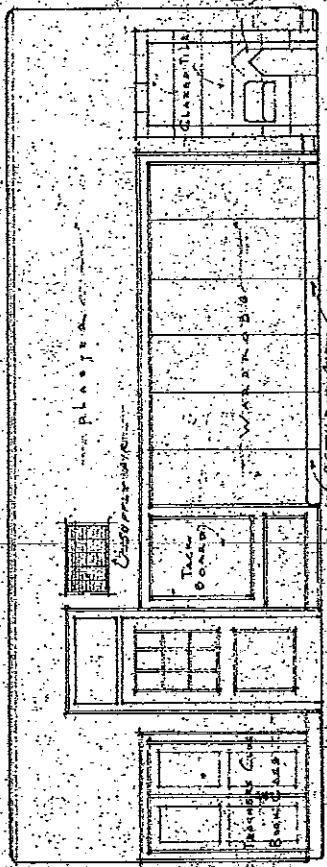








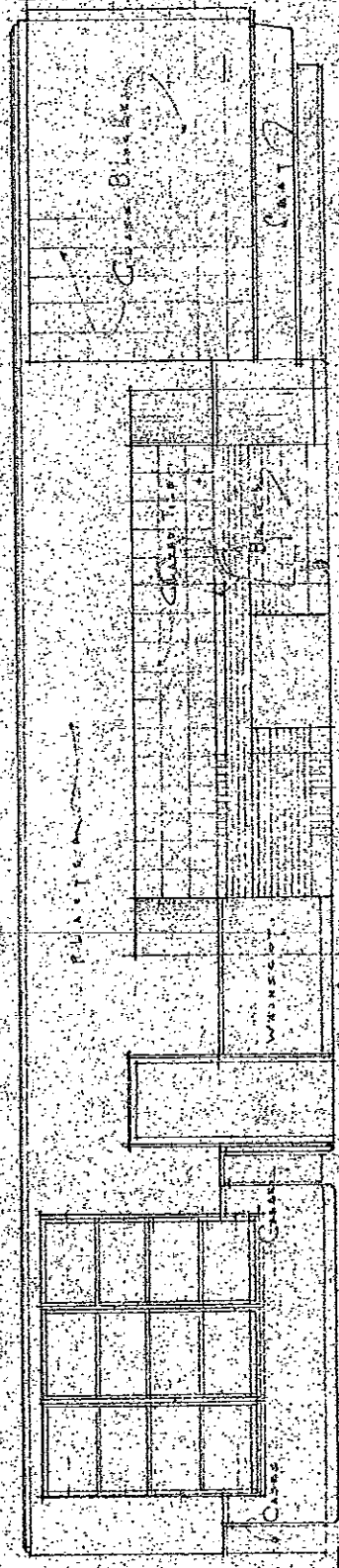
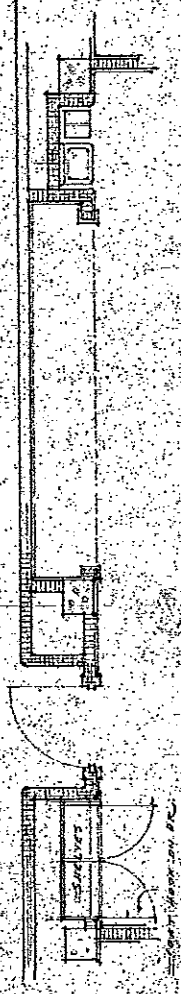




Waste Receptacle

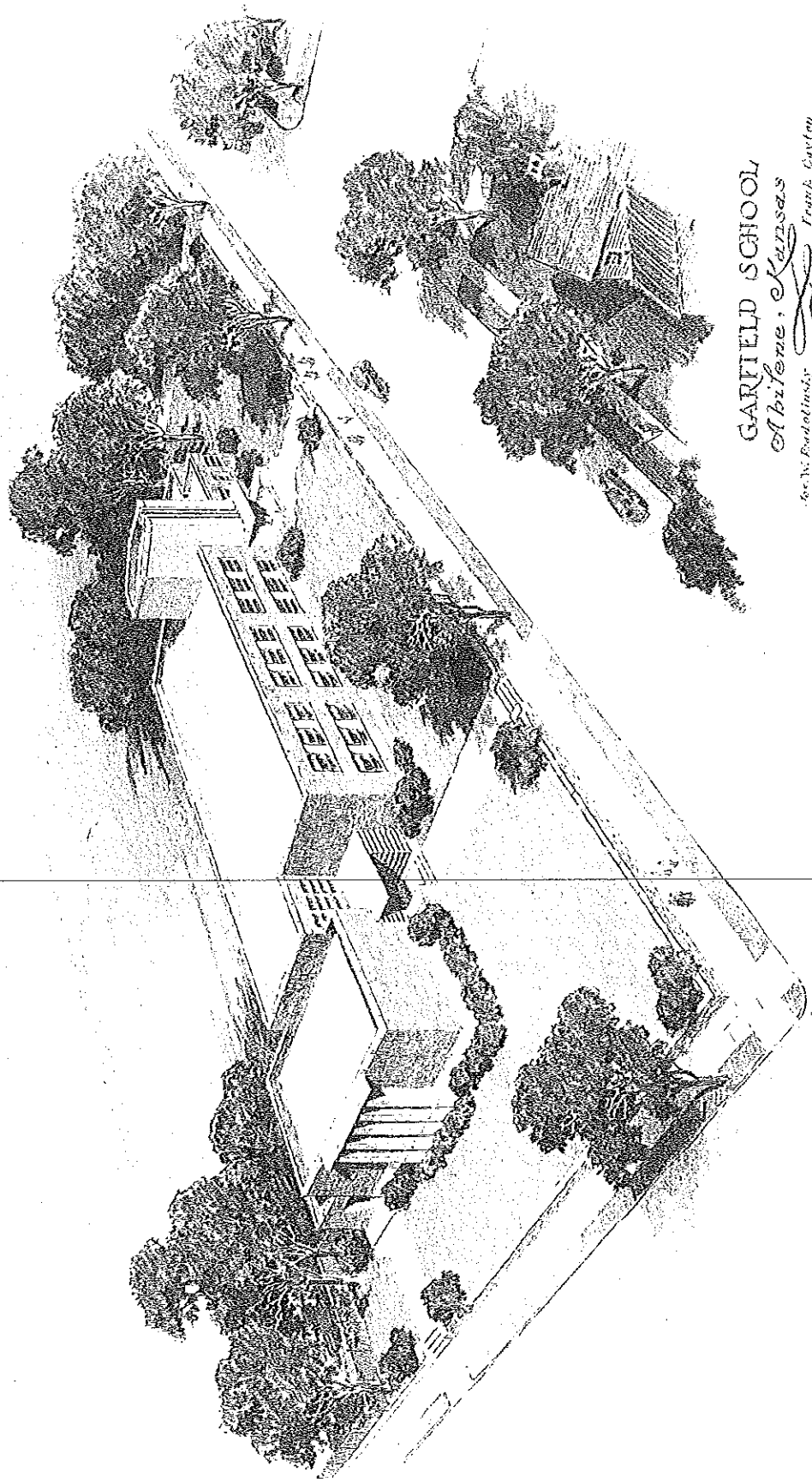
TYPE 1 CLASS ROOM

1/4" = 1'-0"



TYPE 2 CLASS ROOM

1/4" = 1'-0"



GARFIELD SCHOOL
Abilene, Kansas
J. W. Fendall & Son
Associated Architects
Frank Gayton
Architect

DEDICATION

Garfield School

April 30, 1942

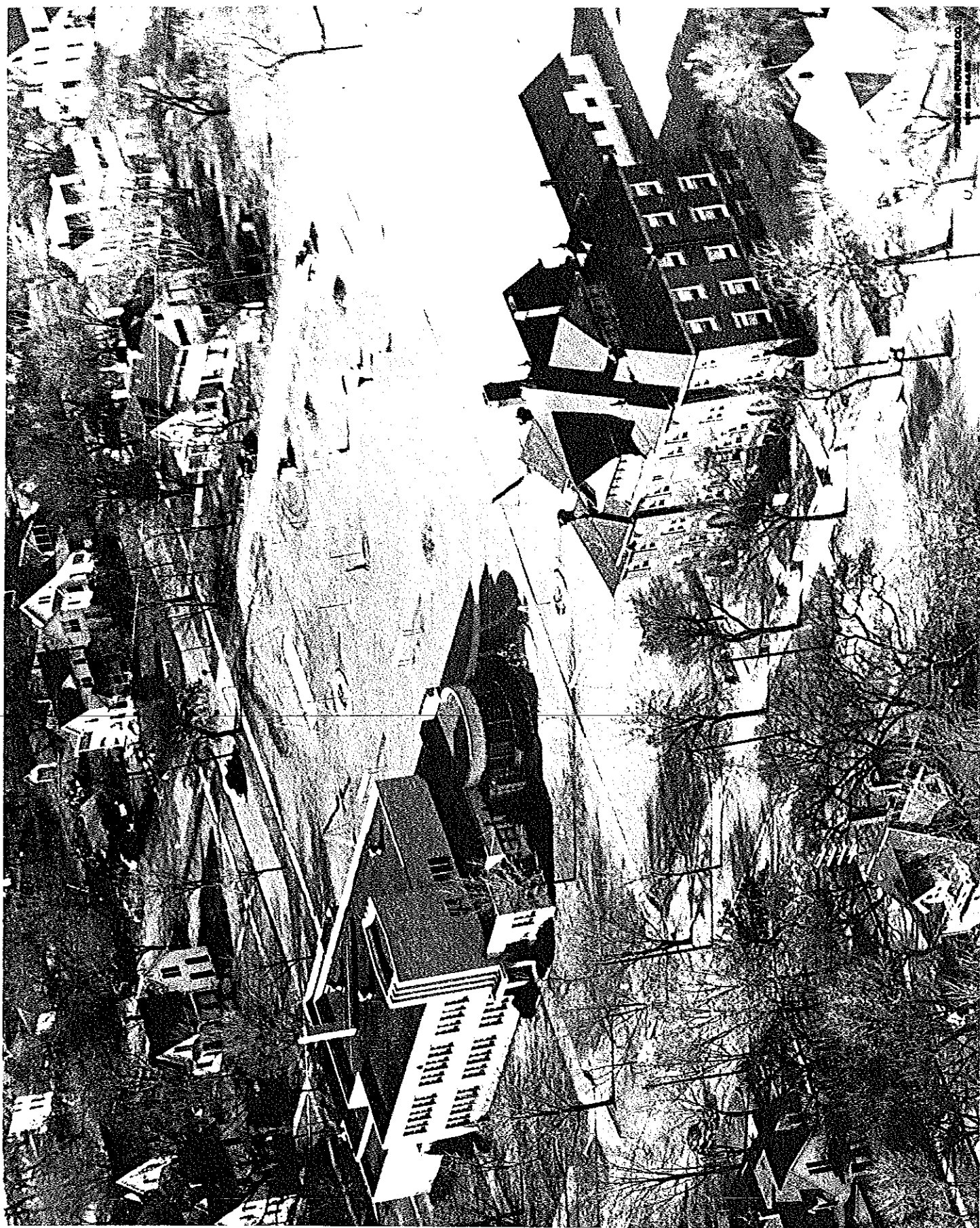
Supt. W. C. Robinson, Presiding

Invocation	Rev. L. E. Cooke
Presentation of Flag	Mrs. Sam Haller The American Legion Auxiliary
Piano Duet	Roberta Harris and Charlotte Laing
Accordion Solo	Buddy Spidell
Introduction of Guests	Supt. W. C. Robinson
Presentation of Building	Howard Keel President of Board of Education
Acceptance of Building	O. M. Harger
Double Quintette	Sixth Grade Girls
"God Bless America"	Max Simmitt (Group Sing, Miss Mary Ruth Thomas, Directing)

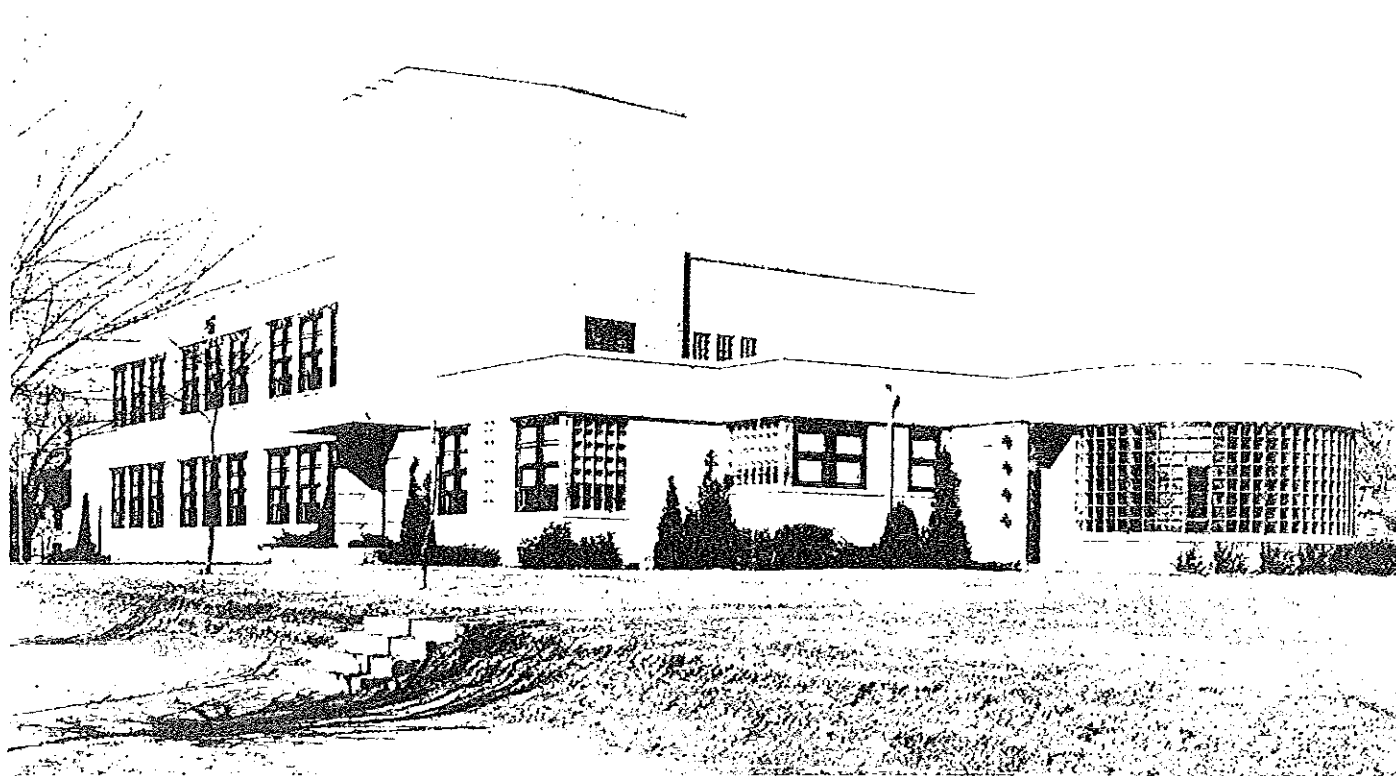
Program is to be transmitted by loudspeakers in
each classroom.

Inspection of entire building will follow program.









General View from the Southeast, Garfield School, Abilene, Kansas. — Jos. W. Radotinsky, Architect, Kansas City, Kansas, and Frank Cayton, Associate Architect, Abilene, Kansas. The tower houses the air intake, the ventilating fans, etc.

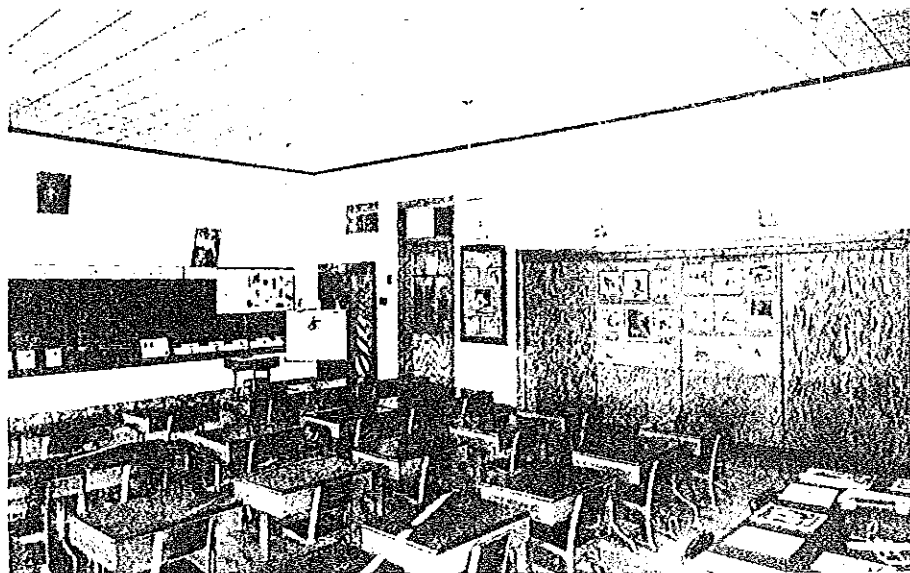
The Garfield School at Abilene, Kansas

W. C. Robinson, Superintendent

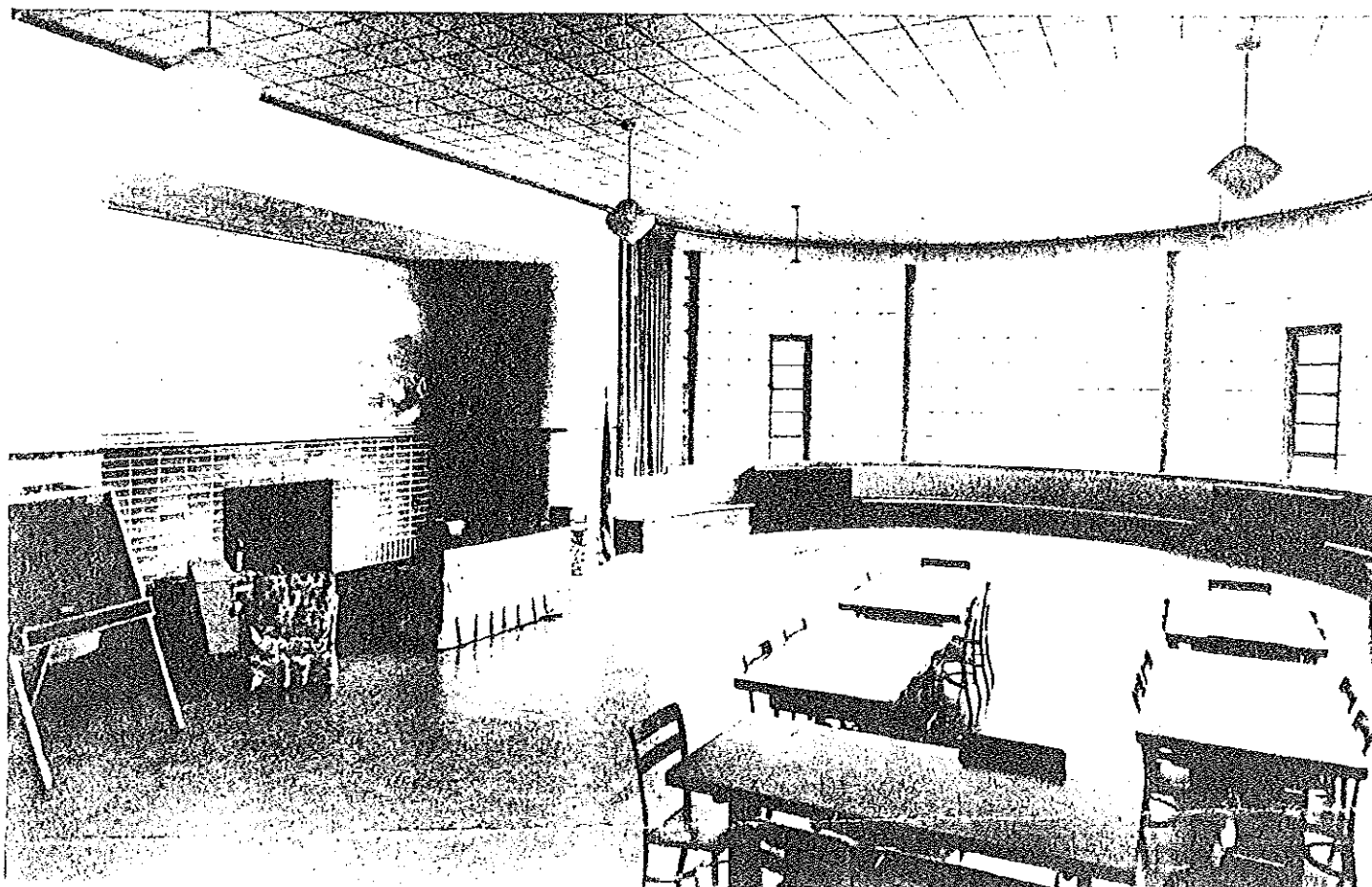
Garfield School was the first unit of a long-range school rehabilitation and replacement program activated by the board of education of Abilene, Kans., during the year 1940. The citizens approved bonds in the amount of \$107,250 to be used in the construction and equipping of the Garfield School, and of the McKinley School, both elementary school units. At the time, the board realized that any monies appropriated by the school district would require additional funds from the Federal Government to meet the costs of construction. Accordingly, aid was requested from the Works Progress Administration for both labor and materials to supplement the amount assigned to this project as the sponsor's contribution toward cost. Approval was received, and work was started during the latter part of 1940; the structure was completed in 1942.

The educational requirements were studied by the board of education, in co-operation with a survey made by the University of Kansas, and then submitted to the architects for the development of the functional plan. The plan is arranged in a manner that will

permit the use of the activity room with its stage, without the use of the remaining building; or the use of the academic section without the use of the activity space or interference with the administrative area. The kindergarten is so placed that students have their separate entrance and also a definite area



A typical classroom showing the movable furniture, the limited chalkboard, and the built-in wardrobe.



The kindergarten is harmoniously finished with a fairy tale mural above the fireplace, colorful inlaid linoleum floor, and sound absorbing ceiling.

of playground which is set aside for their play.

The building is located near the center of population of a permanent residential area of the city, and therefore serves both educational and community functions.

The exterior of the building is of light, buff brick with stone trim; the interior is of reinforced concrete frame with fireproof walls and finish materials selected on the basis of minimum maintenance requirements.

The interior walls of the activity room are finished with a smooth, buff brick above a dark brown brick wainscot. Floors are asphalt tile, and the ceiling is made of tile board.

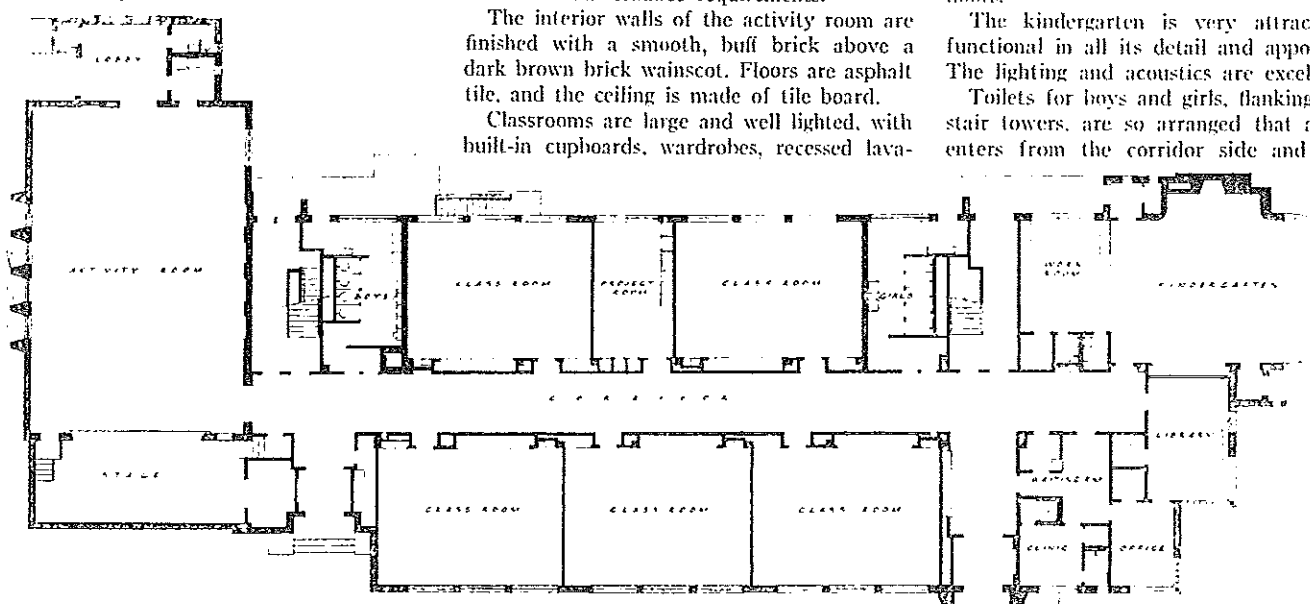
Classrooms are large and well lighted, with built-in cupboards, wardrobes, recessed lav-

atories in the walls, and ample blackboard and tackboard space.

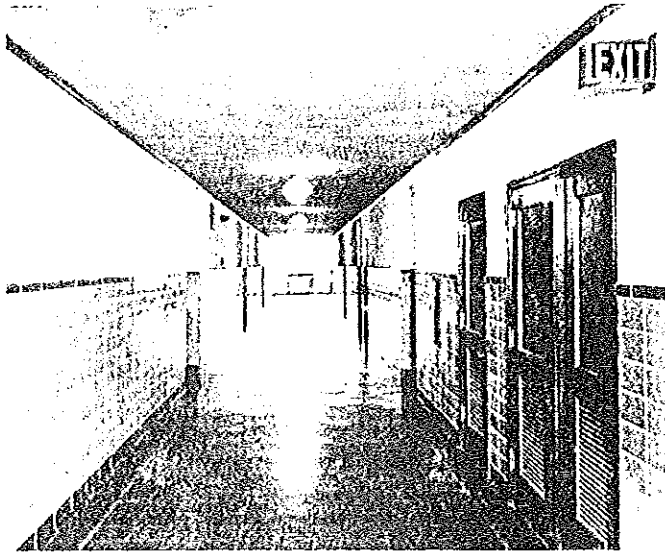
Project rooms with built-in cases, counters, and sinks are located on the first and second floors.

The kindergarten is very attractive, yet functional in all its detail and appointments. The lighting and acoustics are excellent.

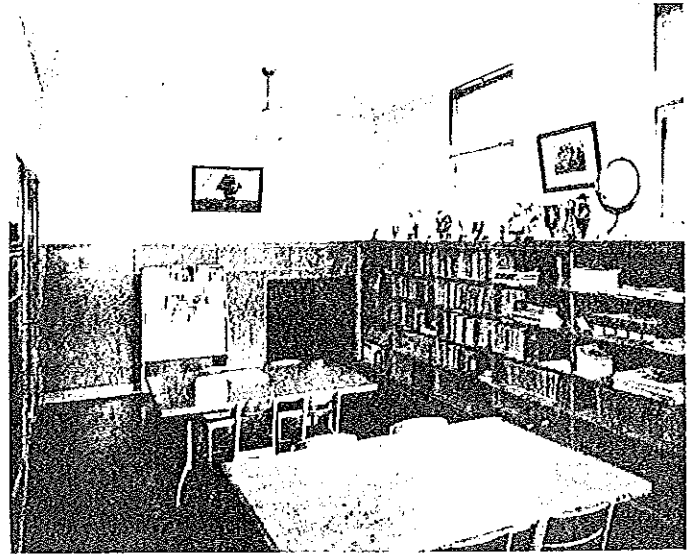
Toilets for boys and girls, flanking the two stair towers, are so arranged that a student enters from the corridor side and may go



First Floor Plan, Garfield Elementary School, Abilene, Kansas. — Jos. W. Radotinsky, Architect, Kansas City, Kansas, and Frank Cayton, Associate Architect, Abilene, Kansas.



The corridors in the Garfield School have been finished to require minimum maintenance and to produce maximum quiet.



The library is fitted with child's size furniture and bookcases.

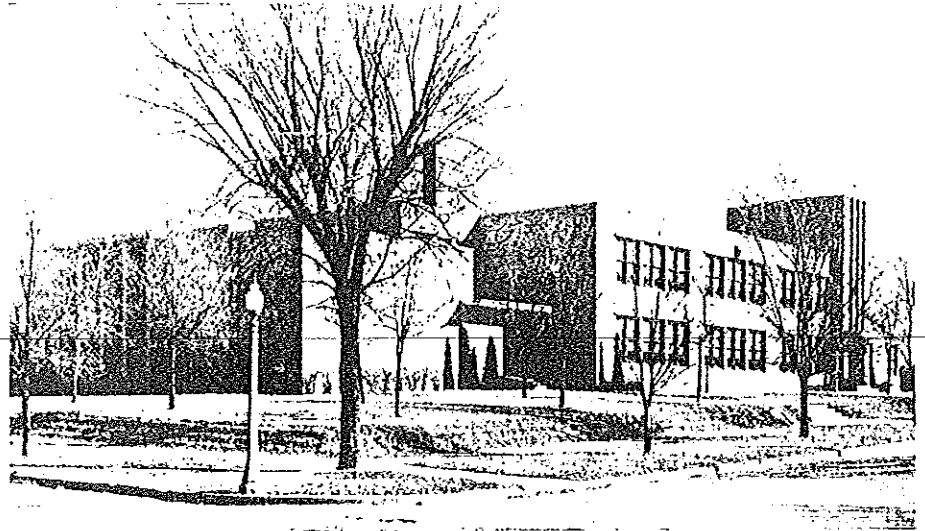
directly to the playgrounds without returning to the corridors of the building.

The administration unit provides space for the principal's office, waiting room, clinic, and library the spaces allocated being functional, economical, and practical.

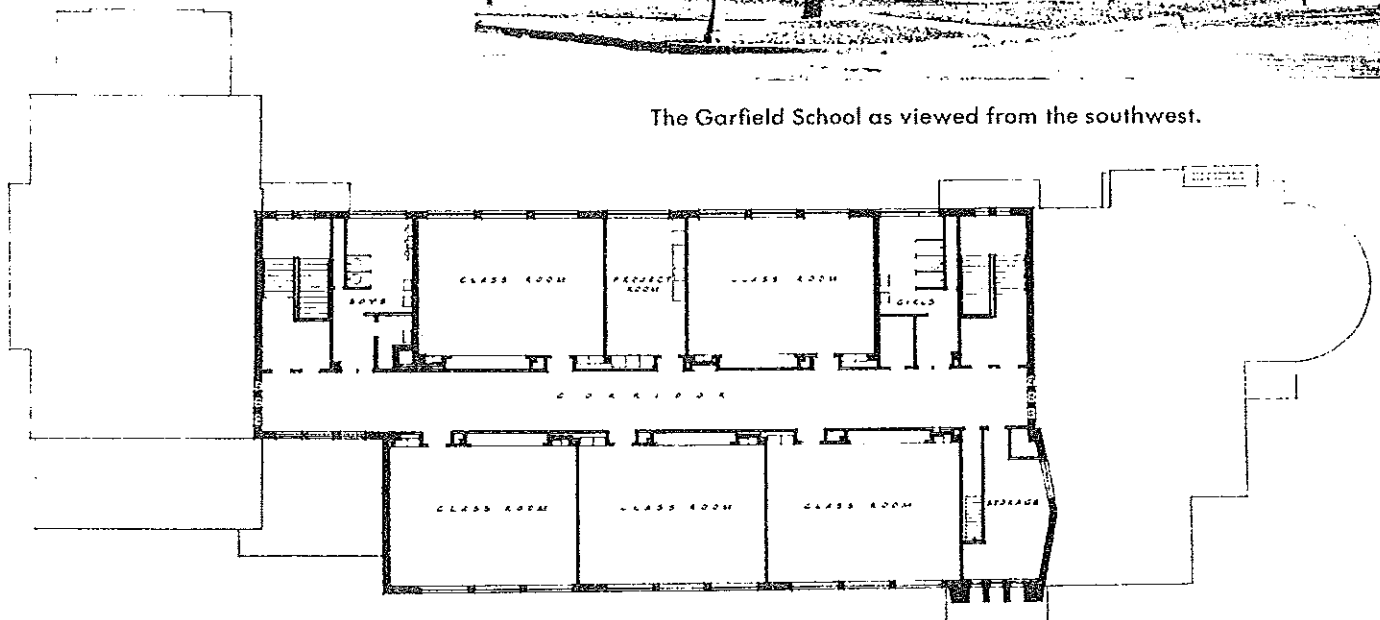
Each classroom is lighted with six incandescent, enclosed light fixtures, the three lights parallel to the exterior wall controlled by one switch, and the three lights parallel to the inside wall controlled by another.

Heating and ventilating are accomplished by the split-system method, which is very desirable in this part of the country.

The building is designed in a manner that will permit the addition of two classrooms at a later date.

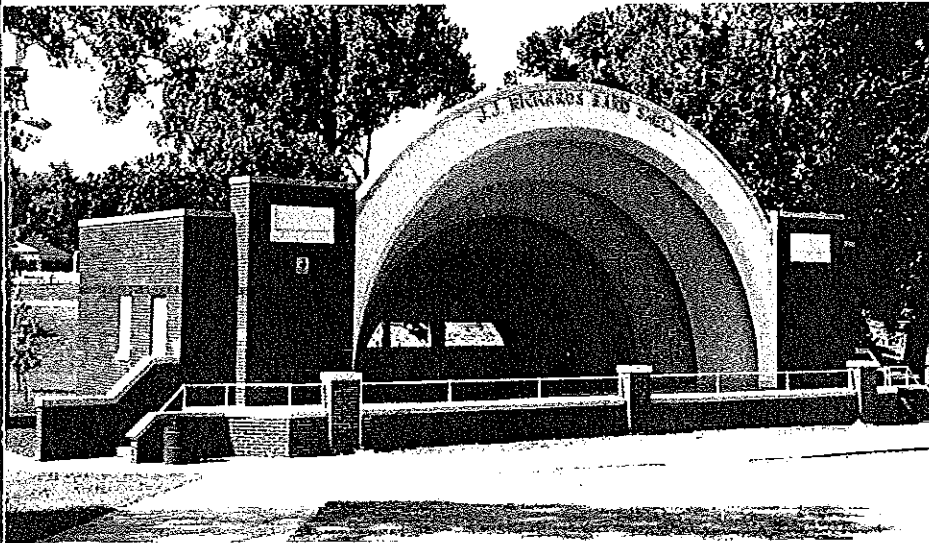


The Garfield School as viewed from the southwest.

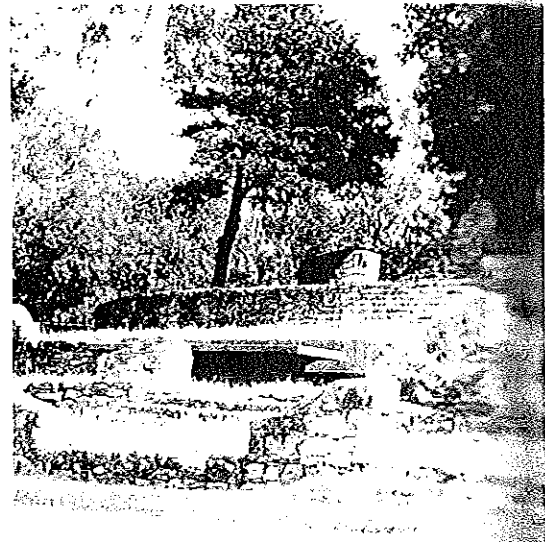


Second Floor Plan, Garfield Elementary School, Abilene, Kansas. — Jos. W. Radotinsky, Architect, Kansas City, Kansas, and Frank Cayton, Associate Architect, Abilene, Kansas.

THE WPA TODAY

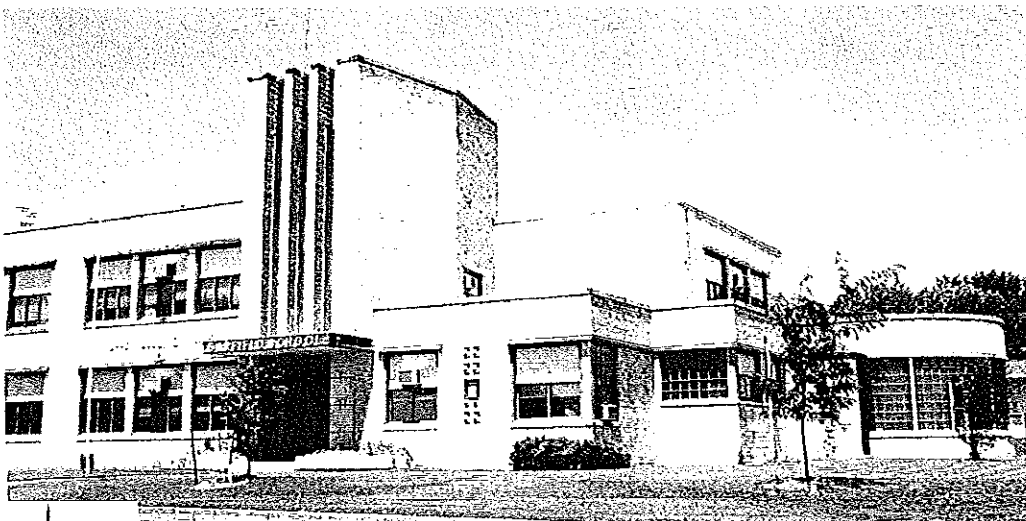
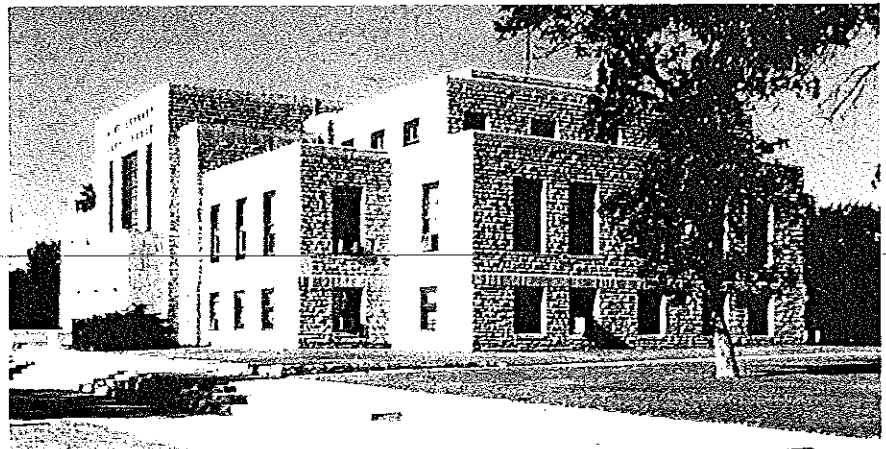


The J. J. RICHARDS BAND SHELL in Pittsburg was constructed in 1936-1937 and is located on the northwest side of town in Lincoln Park. It is one of twenty-six remaining New Deal structures in Crawford County.

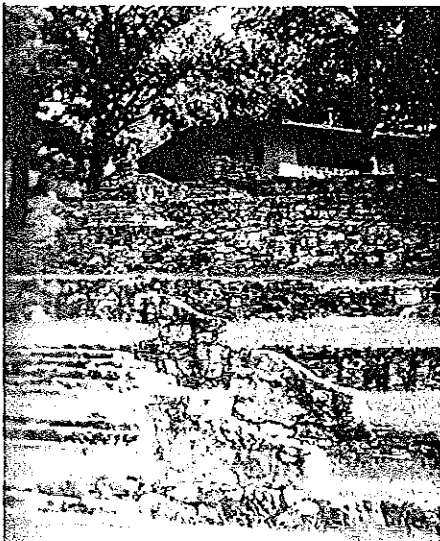


SCHERMERHORN PARK at the south edge of Galena off Highway 26 offers examples of both KERC and WPA projects. Improvements to the park, such as the terracing (above), was created in August 1935 by KERC crews, with \$11,000.

* The JEWELL COUNTY COURTHOUSE in Mankato was built in 1936-1937 with \$122,000 of WPA funds plus sponsor funding. It occupies a full block facing onto Commercial Street. The art deco style is constructed of rough-cut limestone.



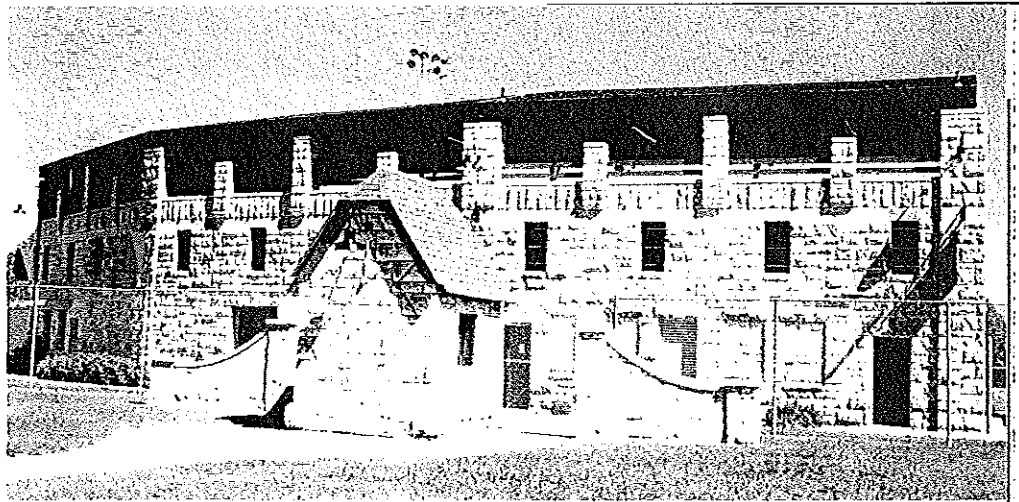
GARFIELD SCHOOL in Abilene, constructed in 1942 with WPA funds, is an excellent example of Moderne architecture. Built as an elementary school, it now serves the upper elementary grades and stands at the corner of Buckeye and Seventh Streets. *



Federal funds. A month later WPA funds were approved to construct a shelter house, two bath houses, and a bathing pool. The WPA project cost about \$29,000 and employed fifty men for one year.



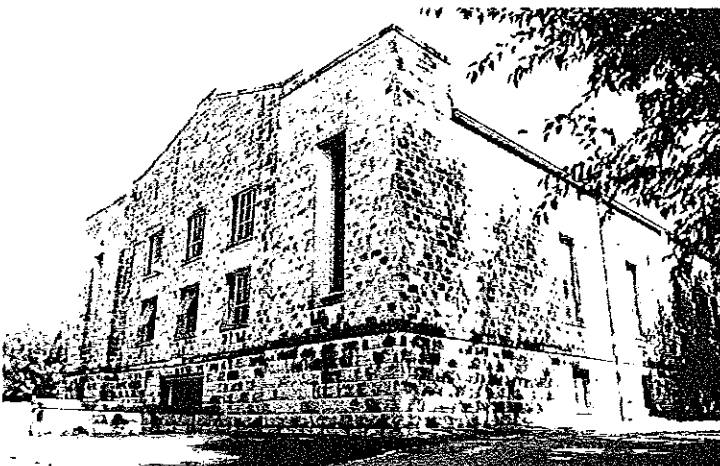
CORONADO HEIGHTS, a tourist attraction two miles north of Lindsborg in McPherson County, received road improvement, a stone shelter house (above), a dozen camp units, and an arch gateway with WPA funds in 1936. It was reported that 123 relief workers were employed on the project, which cost more than \$15,000.



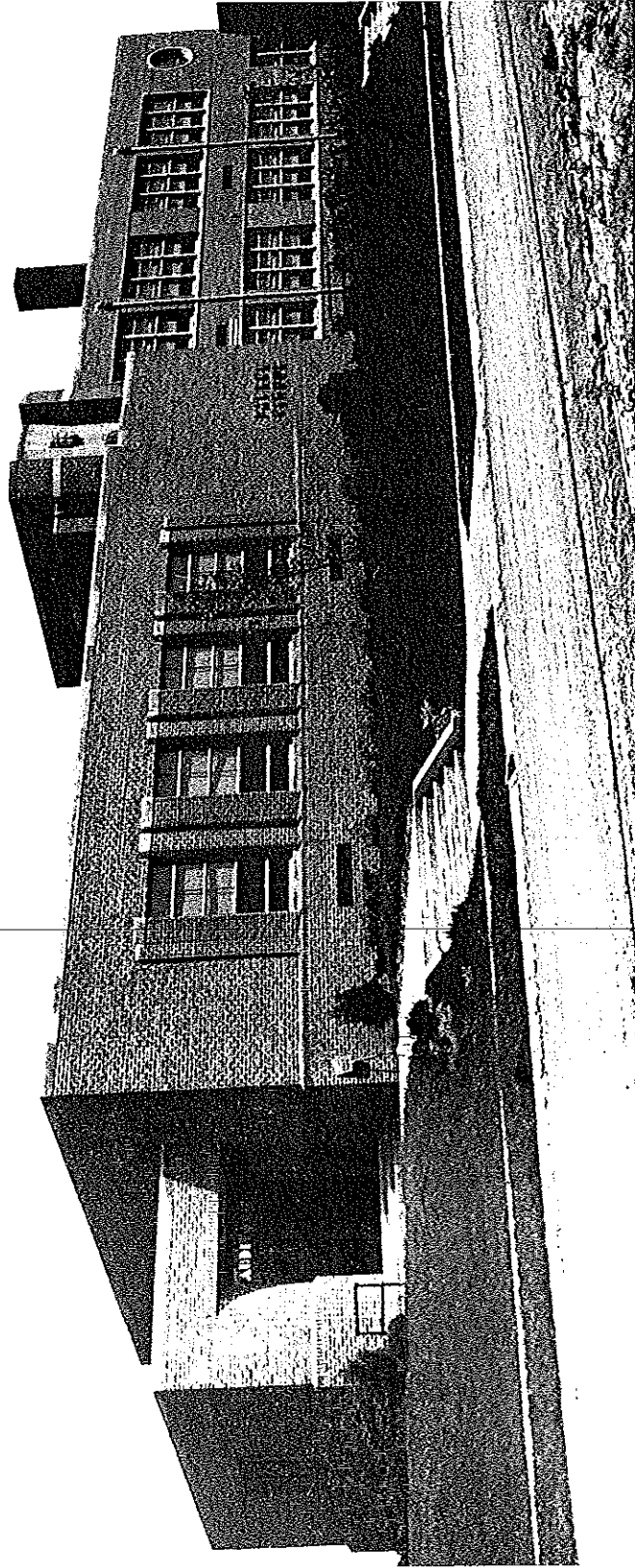
Construction of **RATHERT STADIUM** in Junction City began in October 1936 and the facility was dedicated on July 17, 1937. That day's edition of the Junction City Daily Union stated, "The stadium is built of attractive cut stone, faces north east, and open grillwork at the back provides a chance for air circulating, making the stadium cooler." It is located at 920 West Thirteenth Street, and it is used today, as it was originally, as a baseball facility.



The **DELAWARE RIVER COMPOSITE TRUSS BRIDGE** spans the river at the northeast city limits of Valley Falls on Coal Creek Road in Jefferson County. It was constructed in 1936 in a collaborative effort employing WPA and Jefferson County crews.



The **ARMORY** in St. Marys was begun in 1941 with \$55,000 in WPA funds. Sixty-five men were employed on the project during the first summer of work. World War II took its toll on the project, leaving a shortage of workers and supplies, but the facility was finished in April 1943 in time to house a war bond dance. The armory was officially dedicated on May 8, 1943.



Parker Elementary, V.C.K.S.
also by J.W. Radomsky

654695 E
4309410 N
zone 14

